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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the relationship between supervisors' use of Bell and Daly's affinity-seeking strategies and their impact on employee satisfaction. Results indicated that 16 of the 25 affinity-seeking strategies were positively correlated with a subordinate's perception of supervisor credibility. Results also indicated that a supervisor's use of affinity-seeking strategies was positively associated with an employee's level of satisfaction. Overall, the results indicated that a supervisor who shows interest in and respects employees will be perceived as credible and have employees who are more satisfied with their supervision. Moreover, results showed that supervisors and subordinates who share open and positive communication were also likely to be more satisfied and liked by one another. Contains 27 references and a figure of data. (Author/RS)

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Running Head: AFFINITY-SEEKING

"The Study of Affinity-Seeking in an Organizational Setting"

A Senior Thesis

Presented to the Faculty of the Department of Communication Studies

University of Wisconsin – La Crosse

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree Bachelor of Science

By

Dominic B. Flath

December 16, 2002

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Abstract

This study investigated the relationship between supervisors' use of Bell and Daly's affinity-seeking strategies and subordinates' perceptions of supervisor credibility. The use of affinity-seeking strategies and their impact on employee satisfaction was also investigated. Results indicated that sixteen of the twenty-five affinity-seeking strategies were positively correlated with a subordinate's perception of supervisor credibility. Results also indicated that a supervisor's use of affinity-seeking strategies was positively associated with an employee's level of satisfaction. Overall, the results indicated that a supervisor who shows interest in and respects employees will be perceived as more credible and have employees that are more satisfied with their supervision. Moreover, results showed that supervisors and subordinates that share open and positive communication were also likely to be more satisfied and liked by one another.

Introduction

Affinity-seeking is "the active social-communicative process by which individuals attempt to get others to like and to feel positive toward them" (Bell and Daly, 1984). One area in which affinity-seeking has been studied is education. Within the field of education, researchers studied how teachers get other teachers and students to like them (McCroskey and McCroskey, 1986). In addition, affinity-seeking is related to students' perceptions of teacher credibility and to motivation (Frymier and Thompson, 1992).

In contrast, an area that has not been studied is how affinity-seeking techniques are used in an organizational setting. It is likely there is a link between affinity-seeking and supervisors' credibility as perceived by subordinates, much like the link between teachers and students. Supervisors' use of affinity-seeking messages may play an important part in organizational members' motivation and satisfaction. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine the role of affinity-seeking strategies in the workplace.

Review of Literature

The literature reviewed for this study will include different types of power, control, and self-determination theory in relation to employee satisfaction. In addition, the role of management, in establishing levels of trust and credibility within the organization will be covered. The use of compliance-gaining tactics as well as affinity-seeking techniques used by supervisors is discussed.

Employee Satisfaction

The study of employee satisfaction is not a new concept. E.A. Locke estimated that "over 3,300 studies on the subject of employee satisfaction had been reported" as cited in Richmond, McCroskey, and Davis, 1986. Since that time, researchers and practitioners of organizational communication continue to study employee satisfaction (Pincus, 1986).

There are many variables that impact employee satisfaction. To start, autonomy, relatedness, and competence are described and evaluated as part of the self-determination theory, which will be discussed later (Ilardi, Leone, Kasser, and Ryan, 1993). Working conditions and job enrichment, employee self-esteem and management communication style are also part of satisfaction research (Richmond, McCroskey, and Davis, 1986). Kramer (1995) suggests that the type of feedback and social support that superiors provide subordinates is key to employee satisfaction. Many variables of employee satisfaction are looked at, most specifically the power or control techniques that supervisors use. "While there is a general consensus that organizational effectiveness depends in part on the exercise of power, the nature of the relationship between power and employee satisfaction is not clear cut" (Richmond, McCroskey, and Davis, 1986, p.180).

Power has been defined as the "influence by one person over others stemming from an organizational position (i.e. positional power), interpersonal relationship (i.e. social power), or individual characteristic (i.e. power-related skills or attributes)" (Ragins and Sundstrom, 1990, p. 274). The perceived power levels of organizational members are all different and gained in various ways. A focus of power research in organizations

is gender. When measuring positional power, subordinates perceived no differences between male and female managers who had equal levels of power. But when subordinates were asked to rate superiors on four different types of power (reward, legitimate, coercive, and expert), it was predicted that male managers would score higher on the traditional male type forms of power – legitimate, coercive, and expert – but females would score higher on reward power. The results showed that males did not score higher on any types of power (Ragins and Sundstrom, 1990). One explanation is that when subordinates have direct experience working with powerful female managers, they disregard or change their stereotypes, or they may even retain their stereotypes but view their managers as exceptions (Ragins and Sundstrom, 1990). These results suggest that although stereotypes of gender may be present, they should be looked past by subordinates in order to see their superiors as effective, thus leading to their satisfaction. It might also show that females are becoming more respected as managers, which can be a great starting point for females to conquer organizational barriers.

Gender is important in determining the amount of power superiors are perceived to have. But there is yet another relevant characteristic that needs to be discussed, and that is control. Externally controlled managers tend to use coercive power more than internally controlled managers. It has also been found that people who lack confidence and need others to comply with them are more likely to use coercive power (Richmond, McCroskey, and Davis, 1986). An example of this is when managers use coercive power with employees they don't trust but use more positive persuasion techniques with employees that they do trust (Richmond, McCroskey, and Davis, 1986). These findings suggest that superiors tend to use a variety of different types of power with subordinates.

The choices that are made are determined by the supervisor's personality as well as the situation.

Because superiors use different techniques of control, the level of employee satisfaction also varies. When employees are allowed to interact and their voices are heard, they tend to be more satisfied then when a supervisor uses coercive power (Richmond, McCroskey, and Davis, 1986). Superiors should be more willing to listen and give feedback to subordinates. Superiors also use other forms of power that relate to employee satisfaction. For example, legitimate, referent, reward, and expert power have also been studied (Nesler, Aguinis, Quigley, Tedeschi, 1993; Ragins and Sundstrom, 1990; Richmond, McCroskey, and Davis, 1986). While power relates to employee satisfaction, internalization (how they feel about something in their mind) is a key factor necessary for satisfaction. Overall, we can conclude that although there are different types of power that can be employed, some are much more effective then others. It was found that the use of referent and expert power are likely to be associated with higher employee satisfaction and improved performance while the use of other types of power such as coercive are likely to lead to lower satisfaction and performance quality (Richmond, McCroskey, and Davis, 1986).

It is clear that the way power is communicated within an organization is related to employee satisfaction. It should also be considered that the power technique used by the superior can have a major impact on how an employee feels towards them, and in turn it will affect the way they act and then will affect the method and amount of controlling messages that are used.

Early research on job satisfaction and workers' attitudes was built upon the idea that workers would be more productive if they were more satisfied (Ilardi, Leone, Kasser, and Ryan, 1993). To refer back to the variables that affect employee satisfaction, it is important to discuss the role of self-determination theory. This theory states that individuals in a specific social context will be more self-motivated and experience greater well being to the extent that they feel competent, autonomous (or self-determined) and related or connected to others (Ilardi, Leone, Kasser, and Ryan, 1993). The theory suggests if an individual's job provides them with those three parts, it is more likely that the person will have greater task enjoyment, general job satisfaction, and psychological adjustment. If the individual experiences the three components they are also more likely to have an internal perceived locus of causality for behavior, which can yield a high degree of self-motivation and commitment (Ilardi, Leone, Kasser, and Ryan, 1993). It is important to make sure that there are opportunities for employees to attain these three different components in organizations because when they do there are great benefits not only for themselves but also the organization. Some of the benefits include the increase in intrinsic motivation, improved problem solving and learning, and enhanced self-esteem and well-being (Ilardi, Leone, Kasser, and Ryan, 1993). In order for these things to be achieved, both the superior and the subordinate need to be involved, but the way the superior relates to and treats the subordinate is what should be considered.

Role of Management

The role of management has been studied with many variables. Two of these are trust and credibility. Schindler and Thomas (1993) state that the concept of trust is a key ingredient for cooperative relationships. The management must create a certain level of

trust within the organization for the well-being of its members as well as the long-term stability of the organization. Employees spend a lot of time and energy protecting themselves because when employees mistrust one another it is felt directly and indirectly within the organization. The maintenance of trust is important for everyone involved because when employees trust one another, their effectiveness and job satisfaction are enhanced (Schindler and Thomas, 1993). Trust consists of a number of constructs including integrity, competence, consistency, loyalty, and openness. These different variables have been tested in order to see if superiors, subordinates, and peers rate them differently. The results showed that no matter what the relationship between the two individuals, the rank order of the five components was the same (Schindler and Thomas, 1993).

The research also revealed that no matter what position people held in an organization, they believed that integrity (how honest and truthful a person was) and competence (how much knowledge they had about a subject in order to complete the task) were the determining factors of trustworthiness (Schindler and Thomas, 1993). For example, when a superior is trying to determine if they can trust a subordinate to complete a task, they look for a certain level of integrity and competence in the individual as an effort to make sure the task is completed effectively. If the task is completed effectively, it is more likely that the superior will trust the individual. The individual has thus established a certain level of credibility.

Credibility has been defined in many different ways. Nesler, Aguinis, Quigley, and Tedeschi (1993) define credibility as the objectively determined truthfulness, follow through, and accuracy of a source. A source with high credibility can be described as one

that is both honest and accurate when communicating with the target, and a source with low credibility can be described as one who is not truthful or consistently fails to fulfill promises made. Overall people are more likely to use information that was provided from those with high credibility rather than lower credibility (Nesler, Aguinis, Quigley, and Tedeschi, 1993).

It has been demonstrated that a high level of trust and credibility are important for an organization to operate successfully. The roles of management can be demonstrated through their communication and messages. These messages include the use of compliance-gaining tactics and affinity-seeking techniques as attempts to maintain employee satisfaction. Compliance gaining tactics are organizational influence tactics; specifically, "situations in which one person is trying to induce another to do something" (Johnson, 1992, p. 55). They can be subdivided further by the social desirability of the tactic, prosocial vs. antisocial tactics, the tendency to use socially acceptable techniques or socially unacceptable techniques. Organizational members with the intention or expectations that the behaviors will benefit the person, group, or organization at which they were directed use prosocial tactics. In contrast, anti-social tactics attempt to gain relational rewards through either psychological force or punishing activity (Johnson, 1992). Liking is considered a prosocial tactic, as negative-altercasting is an antisocial tactic. In an effort to study communication competence, Johnson's research suggests that a supervisor will be more communicatively competent if they use prosocial rather than antisocial compliance gaining tactics (Johnson, 1992). Thus, a superior who is able to gain compliance by using prosocial tactics is more likely to gain power and be liked more (Johnson, 1992). Overall, it shows that the more willing superiors are to communicate

and share feedback with subordinates, the more successful both of them will be. In fact, self-disclosure is one way a supervisor can demonstrate that they are warm and friendly (Ladany, Walker, and Melincoff, 2001). Supervisors' use of self-disclosure is one way that they can encourage subordinates to self-disclose. The more comfortable they are communicating with one another, the more likely they are to like and feel positive toward one another, which is the whole goal of the use of affinity-seeking techniques.

Affinity-seeking is a strategic activity with many options available for an individual at any point in time. Individuals can and do elicit liking from others through the manipulation of social behaviors (Bell and Daly, 1984). Although there are a lot of options for individuals, there are also constraints. The constraints are personal and contextual in nature, and range from a person's dispositions and social skills, to past experiences. Thus when an individual is seeking affinity, they should decide on an optimal strategy or strategies for the given situation. Education research reported that teachers' use of specific affinity-seeking strategies differ across grade levels (Frymier and Thompson, 1992). Supervisors' will likely use different affinity-seeking techniques with people who have just entered the organization and those who have been there for a given period of time. Once they have decided on a strategy or strategies, they not only need to be integrated but implemented in a specific order (Bell and Daly, 1984). The quality of affinity-seeking strategies as enacted is important when considering the target behavior. The way in which we communicate with another person determines in large part how we are perceived by and respond to the other person, and in turn may tell us what strategy in the sequence to use next or omit (Richmond, McCroskey, and Davis, 1986; Bell and Daly, 1984).

Research shows that there are a lot of variables that relate to employee satisfaction. Affinity-seeking clearly seems to fit prosocial behaviors, yet only one affinity-seeking article related to organizations can be found. It was revealed that the use of positive communication techniques was highly related to employee satisfaction. Basically, the more positive one is, the more competent and related to one another they will feel. Once supervisors have done that they are more susceptible to liking and in turn will establish a certain level of credibility and trust. There is a clear connection between affinity-seeking and employee satisfaction. Overall, people expend considerable social energy attempting to get others to like and appreciate them. The subordinate who gets along with his/her supervisor is more likely to be satisfied than the subordinate who doesn't. The supervisor who is liked and has developed a positive relationship is likely to be more satisfied and have subordinates who are more satisfied with their supervision (Richmond, McCroskey, and Davis, 1986).

Research Questions

In light of the above literature review, it is obvious that affinity-seeking can be explored in organizational settings much like it has been studied in education. The variables of credibility and satisfaction are important in the understanding of communication in the workplace. To further analyze supervisor and subordinate relationships, the following research questions are presented.

***RQ*$_1$**: Is a supervisor's use of affinity-seeking strategies positively related to a subordinate's perception of supervisor credibility?

***RQ*$_2$**: Is a supervisor's use of affinity-seeking strategies positively related to employee satisfaction?

Method

Empirical means "observable" and thus applies to all communication research that tests statements against data. Empirical descriptive research includes gathering fresh data to survey a matter (Reinard, 2001). With those definitions it is clear that this study is descriptive empirical research. There will be a reporting of and observation of data arguing for correlation, not causality. This type of research is also suggested when asking questions about current descriptions of things and explores explanations that characterize things as they are now (Reinard, 2001).

A survey is a study that uses questionnaires or interviews to discover descriptive characteristics of phenomena (Reinard, 2001). Thus surveys were used to collect data for this study. Through the use of surveys, researchers can gain a better understanding of what is going on in the environment around them. In this study, the attitudes and beliefs of both supervisors and subordinates are important. Surveys allow the researcher to analyze both the attitudes and beliefs of participants. However, a survey for the student only has been developed based on the following instruments; Bell and Daly (1984), and The Ash Questionnaire (1972) which is based on the Smith, Kendall, and Hulin "Job Description Index" (1969).

Definitions

In order to fully understand the hypotheses for this study, some key terms must be defined. First, Bell and Daly (1984) define affinity-seeking as "the active social-communicative process by which individuals attempt to get others to like and to feel positive toward them." In this study, the 25-item typology developed by Bell and Daly was used to operationalize affinity-seeking.

Next, credibility has been defined in many different ways. Nesler, Aguinis, Quigley, and Tedeschi (1993) define credibility as "the objectively determined truthfulness, follow through, and accuracy of a source." High and low levels are used to operationalize credibility. A source with high credibility can be described as one that is both honest and accurate when communicating with the target, and a source with low credibility can be described as one who is not truthful or consistently fails to fulfill promises made.

Third, satisfaction is generally considered to be an individual's perceptual/emotional reaction to important facets of work. More specifically, "a pleasurable or positive emotional state from the appraisal of one's job or experiences" (Pincus, 1986, p. 396). In this study, job satisfaction was operationalized with questions from The Ash Questionnaire (1972) which is based on the Smith, Kendall, and Hulin "Job Description Index (JDI)" (1969).

Lastly, the participants are defined. A supervisor is one who oversees, and has partial control over the subordinates' actions in an organization. A subordinate is one who is overseen, and whose actions are partially controlled by another.

Subjects

The sample population for this research included students (subordinates) in University of Wisconsin – LaCrosse work-study and any other student employment relationships. Although there are many advantages of random sampling, sometimes it is simply not possible (Reinard, 2001). Therefore, this study was carried out through the use of convenience sampling, surveying the people who were the most readily available. It is important to receive responses from people of all ages and experience levels in order

to fully understand the effects of the situations in which people are involved. To fully understand and collect data that accurately reflects characteristics of the population, it is equally important to secure a sufficient amount of responses, or a representative sample. In this case, the researcher collected surveys from 52 student workers, which yielded usable responses.

Procedures

Reinard (2001, p. 434) defines data as "the actual individual events in a sample." Data for this study was collected using one method -- through the University of Wisconsin – LaCrosse CST 110 Research Pool. Once students showed interest in the study, surveys were distributed and collected by the researcher from those who have been or are involved in any kind of supervisor/subordinate relationship. With the work-study relationships, relevance of the research was briefly discussed, and then the instructions were covered. The researcher also stressed the fact that participation in the research was totally voluntary.

Data Analysis

Once the data was collected in accordance with the above guidelines it was analyzed. Through the use of the statistical program, SPSS, bivariate correlations/relationships (coincidence) of variables were computed. Furthermore, the results are quantitative and descriptive in nature.

Results

As previously discussed, it is likely that there is a link between affinity-seeking and a supervisor's credibility as perceived by a subordinate worker. In addition, a supervisor's use of affinity-seeking strategies may play an important part in an organizational member's motivation and satisfaction.

***RQ*$_1$**: Is a supervisor's use of affinity-seeking strategies positively related to a subordinate's perception of supervisor credibility?

The data showed a positive relationship between supervisor's use of affinity-seeking strategies and the subordinate's perception of the supervisor's credibility, (r^2 = .604, $p < .0001$).

More specifically, the affinity-seeking strategies were correlated with the subordinate's perceptions of supervisor credibility. Sixteen (16) of the twenty-five (25) strategies proved to be statistically significant. (See Figure 1, Page 16)

At the 0.01 level, .363 is the lowest score (Optimism); and .627 is the highest score (Trustworthiness). At the 0.05 level, .297 is the lowest score (Nonverbal Immediacy); and .349 is the highest score (Similarity).

***RQ*$_2$**: Is a supervisor's use of affinity-seeking strategies positively related to employee satisfaction?

The research data shows a positive relationship between a supervisor's use of affinity-seeking strategies and employee satisfaction, (r^2 = .500, $p < .0001$).

Figure 1		
Affinity Seeking Strategy	P Value	R^2 * indicates significant value
Altruism	<.01	.377*
Assume Control	<.80	-.035
Assume Equality	<.01	.375*
Comfortable Self	<.01	.372*
Concede Control	<.01	.426*
Conversational Rule Keeping	<.01	.487*
Dynamism	<.05	.307*
Elicit Others Disclosure	<.30	.144
Facilitate Enjoyment	<.10	.228
Inclusion Of Other	<.64	-.065
Influence Perceptions of Closeness	<.05	.306*
Listening	<.01	.576*
Nonverbal Immediacy	<.05	.297*
Openness	<.62	.069
Optimism	<.01	.363*
Personal Autonomy	<.27	.155
Physical Attractiveness	<.07	.252
Present Interesting Self	<.01	.375*
Reward Association	<.01	.366*
Self-Concept Confirmation	<.07	.253
Self-Inclusion	<.37	.127
Sensitivity	<.05	.324*
Similarity	<.05	.349*
Supportiveness	<.01	.380*
Trustworthiness	<.01	.627*

Discussion

The purpose of this research was to examine the role of affinity-seeking strategies in the workplace. More specifically, the research sought to address how a supervisor's use of affinity-seeking strategies relates to a subordinates perception of supervisor credibility and, how a supervisor's use of affinity-seeking strategies relates to employee satisfaction. The collected data shows positive relationships between all of the variables.

First, a supervisor's use of affinity-seeking strategies affects the subordinate's perception of their supervisor's credibility. As previously mentioned, sixteen (16) of the twenty-five (25) strategies are positively related to the subordinate's perception of their supervisors credibility. They are: *trustworthiness* – a supervisor who is honest, reliable, and carries through with tasks; *listening* – a supervisor who listens actively to what the subordinate says; *conversational rule keeping* – a supervisor who is polite and cooperative during interactions with the subordinate; *concede control* – a supervisor who allows the subordinate to have control of relational activities (i.e. meetings); *supportiveness* – a supervisor who is supportive of non-work issues; *altruism* – a supervisor who is helpful with whatever the subordinate is working on; *assume equality* – a supervisor who acts as s/he is on an equal level with the subordinate; *present interesting self* – a supervisor who is unique and interesting to know; *comfortable self* – a supervisor who acts comfortable and relaxed around the subordinate; *reward association* – a supervisor who rewards the subordinate for interacting with them; *optimism* – a supervisor who is positive, one who uses mostly positive and favorable expressions; *similarity* – a supervisor that has a lot in common with the subordinate; *sensitivity* – a supervisor who is warm and empathic; *dynamism* – a supervisor who is active and

enthusiastic; *influence perceptions of closeness* – a supervisor who talks about "we" rather than "you and I"; and *nonverbal immediacy* – a supervisor who shows interest in the subordinate through their nonverbal interactions (smile, wink, head nods).

A supervisor is a key leader in an organization. Therefore, they have to be honest and accurate when communicating with the subordinate, which both are qualities associated with highly credible supervisors. Like the relationship between teachers and his/her students, it is equally important for supervisors and subordinates to maintain a good working relationship with one another. In fact, Frymier's 1992 research showed that two of the same strategies, *conversational rule keeping* and *optimism*, were found to be positively associated with student motivation and teacher credibility. Since the relationship between teachers and students is similar to that of supervisors and subordinates, the results are closely related.

Altogether, this collection of affinity-seeking strategies provides supervisors with evidence about behaviors that can be used in order to improve their relationship with the subordinate. It is important that supervisors show these behaviors because they cannot determine whether they are credible or not. Even though they may feel that they are credible, it is something that can only be determined by the subordinates.

The majority of employees want to feel like they are part of the organization. With that in mind, when supervisors act as if they are similar, are on an equal level, and show the subordinate sensitivity they help make the subordinate feel comfortable in the organization. Along the same lines, if a supervisor encourages subordinates to share feedback and actively listens to what the subordinate is saying they may also feel more comfortable.

Overall, these strategies suggest that supervisors, who show interest in and respect for subordinates, are more likely to have subordinates with higher perceptions of their credibility. Together most of the affinity-seeking strategies in the list just seem to make sense because they are qualities of an employee-centered leader or one that uses prosocial tactics, such as liking.

However, in this study nine (9) of the affinity-strategies were not correlated with subordinate perceptions of supervisor credibility. They are: *assume control* – a supervisor who presents themselves as a person who has control; *elicit others disclosure* – a supervisor who encourages the subordinate to engage in conversation about significant personal issues; *facilitate enjoyment* – a supervisor who participates in similar activities that the subordinate finds positive and enjoyable; *inclusion of other* – a supervisor who includes the subordinate in his/her social groups; *openness* – a supervisor who shares personal information with the subordinate; *personal autonomy* – a supervisor who is willing to express disagreement, on that is independent and a free thinker; *physical attractiveness* – a supervisor who dresses and grooms appropriately for interactions with the subordinate; *self-concept confirmation* – a supervisor who respects and compliments the subordinate frequently; and *self-inclusion* – a supervisor who comes in frequent contact with the subordinate outside of work.

In any study it has to be expected that not all of the affinity-seeking strategies would be positively related to a subordinate's perception of supervisor credibility. The nine strategies listed above reveal that not all supervisors are perceived as credible for various reasons.

First, a supervisor that presents him/herself as a person that has control *(assume control),* is likely not showing interest in or respecting the subordinate as much as they could be. Yes, part of a supervisor's job is helping lead others and making decisions. However, subordinates prefer to be involved in the decision making process, and rightfully so, since decisions often have an effect on them. In fact, previous research shows that the most preferred style of leadership by subordinates is the *consults style*. When the supervisor/manager uses this style, they do not make a decision until after the situation has been presented to members of the group and he/she has listened to the subordinate's advice and/or suggestions. The supervisor/manager still makes the final decision, but not until he/she has communicated with other staff members (Sadler and Hofstede, 1976).

Next, it is important to realize that supervisors and subordinates are not always in the same social circle and do not partake in the same social events. Therefore, it may be difficult for either party to become comfortable with sharing personal information. In other words, there may not be reciprocal disclosures between both parties.

As already discussed, previous research reveals that there are many variables that impact employee satisfaction and the statistics for this study show that a supervisor's use of affinity-seeking strategies is positively related to employee satisfaction. Subordinates perception of supervisor credibility truly has an impact on their level of satisfaction. The majority of the affinity-seeking strategies that are positively related to subordinate perceptions of supervisor credibility are associated with verbal and nonverbal communication.

Therefore, it is also appropriate to assume that levels of employee satisfaction can very greatly depending on the supervisors level of communication. Highly credible supervisors are respected for accurately, honestly, and frequently communicating with subordinates in a positive manner. As Richmond, McCroskey, and Davis reported in a 1986 study, a supervisor who receives less affinity-seeking communication from a subordinate will also make fewer affinity-seeking attempts in return. Then the supervisor and subordinate must share communication equally. If they communicate with one another positively and fluently their relationships will be enhanced. The better the working relationship that the supervisor and subordinate build with one another the more likely it is that they will both be satisfied. In fact, employee centered communication increases subordinate satisfaction of communication.

As early research on job satisfaction suggests, workers are more productive if they are more satisfied. Positive communication on the both the supervisor and subordinates part can have an impact on not only the organization but the individuals themselves. The more comfortable they are communicating with each other, the more likely they are to like and feel positive toward one another, which is the goal of using affinity-seeking strategies. Overall these results support the fact that if you like the people around you and they like you, both parties are likely to be more satisfied.

The qualitative data that subordinates provided about their supervisors was consistent with the quantitative data. Most subordinates seemed to be satisfied with their job and the supervision they are receiving because it allows them to learn valuable life lessons. As supervisors and management personnel it is important to remember that there is no "best" way to supervise people. Therefore, the supervisor has to be prepared to

employ their own methods and test their own ideas. At the same time they have to remember to respect and show interest in employees by being genuine, approachable, listening to suggestions, and by giving immediate, specific, and frequent feedback.

Limitations

One limitation was the use of convenience sampling. Random sampling brings about results that, in general, are more representative of a population. With the use of convenience sampling it is important to realize that the number of responses received may not be what the researcher desires. In turn, the results are not as descriptive as they could be if a larger sample was obtained. Overall, the larger the sample, there is a greater chance that the results will be more representative.

Next, due to the university setting the researcher did not have access to a large population of work-study students or student employees due to restrictive stipulations set forth by the Financial Aid and Human Resources office. Therefore, work-study students had to be contacted through the University of Wisconsin – La Crosse CST 110 Research pool. With this setting the students only signed up to participate in research if the topic was something that interested them. Then the hope of getting representative data from people of different ages and experiences was jeopardized.

A large limitation for this study was the fact that there is not much previous research on the use of affinity-seeking strategies in an organizational setting. The researcher then had to resort to other areas of study where affinity-seeking has been covered in order to understand the different constructs; in this case it was education.

A major concern that presents itself with "senior project" is the time factor. We only have so much time in a semester to complete a project, thus we are forced to collect

all of our data within a short time period. In most cases, the research could be carried out over many more months or years. This might yield more wide-ranging data.

Conclusion

To conclude, supervisor credibility and employee satisfaction are two important areas of study that are positively related to an organizations level of success. In order to be effective within an organization it is important that supervisors and subordinates know how to communicate and work with one another.

This research has yielded a lot of information that will be useful to supervisors and subordinates in all levels of organizations. The results of this study reveal that supervisors who use affinity-seeking strategies are likely to be perceived as more credible and have employees that are more satisfied then those who do not use the strategies. Basically, the results suggest that organizations should spend more time training supervisors and subordinates to communicate with one another more positively. Over time organizations will benefit from more positive communication as both parties will become more productive as levels of satisfaction increase.

While limitations were discussed earlier, they are also opportunities because they provide us with many ideas for further research. Human communication researchers could use methods very similar to the one used in this study to conduct further research.

First, this study should be replicated in different organizational environments with larger populations to see if the results are consistent -- since it is likely that the affinity-seeking strategies that affect a subordinate's perception of supervisor credibility may change as people gain more work experience. In addition, the relationship between the supervisor's use of affinity-seeking strategies and a subordinate's level of motivation

should be studied. More specifically, how the specific techniques used relate to or fit with intrinsic or extrinsic motivation. Another area that could be studied is how affinity-seeking strategies used by supervisors differ according to the subordinates age and gender. Moreover, it is suggested that future studies be done that relate affinity-seeking to organizational rather than educational settings.

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